

**The potential of the Chinese market  
for New Zealand tourism:  
Chinese tourists and Chinese heritage  
in New Zealand**

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# **Executive summary**

## **Introduction**

With the increase of average income and a less restrictive tourism policy, Chinese people are able to travel within and outside of their homeland. In 23 years, China has risen rapidly as a new major source of outbound tourists in the world (GOV.cn, 2005) and has become an important tourist market for New Zealand. In order to understand more of Chinese tourists, the current situation of Chinese outbound tourism and its significance to New Zealand, and visitors' characteristics will be reviewed in this report. In addition, New Zealand's objectives regarding development of the Chinese market, and the appeal of New Zealand Chinese heritage will be discussed.

## **Chinese Culture**

China is a big country with a surface area of 9,600,000 km<sup>2</sup> and a population exceeding 1,300,000,000 souls. It has over five thousand years of history, and a rich heritage of collections, buildings and cultures from different dynasties. Chinese people are interested in heritage tourism in their own country and abroad, and when they go on a trip they prefer packaged tour and staying at hotels to other forms of travel.

## **Overview of the Chinese Market**

The Chinese outbound tourism market started in 1983, when Hong Kong and Macao were opened to tourists from mainland China. In 23 years, Chinese outbound tourism has experienced dramatic development. Thailand was the first country identified as a tourist destination for Chinese tourists in 1988. Australia and New Zealand were the first two western countries to become approved overseas tourism destinations for Chinese. There are now 76 countries and regions offered as destinations for outbound group tours from China (GOV.cn, 2005).

Twenty authorised Chinese agents are qualified to sell holiday travel to New Zealand (Tourisminfo, 2005). Chinese holiday travellers to New Zealand must be from approved places; they are Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang province, and Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou city (Cntr.gov.cn, n.d.). However travellers from the rest of China can visit New for business, to visit friend and family (VFR) and for educational purposes (Tourisminfo, 2005).

Although China is a newly and developing tourist market, it has become New Zealand's sixth biggest market and is expected to become the fourth biggest in the next five years (Rowan, 2005). China is also New Zealand's fifth largest source of international visitor expenditure, which has reached NZ\$403,926,733 from March 2004 to March 2005 (TRCNZ, 2005).

### **Visitor profile**

Chinese people started to know about New Zealand through its dairy products. With the increase of the number of Chinese students coming, more and more people are aware of New Zealand. Most Chinese people see New Zealand as an agricultural country which is famous for Maori culture, dairy, sheep and wool products.

The age of Chinese visitors to New Zealand range from 15 to those over 65, with the majority aged between 35 and 54 years of age. This group of people are mainly holiday and business travellers and usually have high social status in China (TRCNZ, 2005; Becken, 2003). VFR travellers are mainly older than the average visitor and the majority come to visit their children who work, study or have migrated to New Zealand. By comparison, educational travellers are younger on average; the majority are between 15 and 24 years of age (TRCNZ, 2005). They are usually from wealthy families and come for high school or tertiary education.

The experience of Chinese tourists is very different depending on their purposes of travel and the visa they have. VFR and educational travellers are able to travel independently, and most of them use private or rental cars and stay at motels when they travel around New Zealand. By comparison, holiday travellers must come with an authorised tour agent, their activities, accommodations and meals are arranged; and they travel by coach on a fixed itinerary.

There are two travel schedules available for holiday tourists to New Zealand. Because of the geographic proximity, Australia and New Zealand are usually sold as a combined tour for twelve days; eight days in Australia and four days in the North Island of New Zealand. Auckland and Rotorua are the most common destinations. Tourists usually go sightseeing around Auckland city, and visit a Maori village and sheep shearing display in Rotorua. Another route involves visiting both the North and South Island within eight or nine days. This is a very new tour option and is less popular to date compared



to the former option. This is because most Chinese tourists would like to see both countries, rather than take an extended trip in New Zealand.

The most popular activity for Chinese visitors is shopping; 80 percent of visitors cited shopping as an activity undertaken in New Zealand in 2004. General sightseeing, eating out and city walks are other popular activities for Chinese visitors (Tourisminfo, 2005).

The length of stay of Chinese visitors to New Zealand has reached two extremes; most holiday tourists stay under five days and business people stay for approximately eight days, while VFR and educational travellers stay for longer than thirty days. This makes comparing the experiences of Chinese visitors difficult. For this reason, in this report the former categories of holiday and business travel will be considered together, while the latter categories of VFR travellers and educational visitors will be considered separately.

Many holiday visitors to New Zealand do not seem very happy with their trip. One reason for their dissatisfaction is the language barrier. The length of stay is also a factor affecting these visitors' satisfaction. By contrast, VFR travellers seem to be very happy with their experiences. This may be because they are looked after by their family and friends, therefore lessening the impact of language difficulties. Their longer length of stay and the option to travel independently around New Zealand may also significantly affect their holiday experiences.

### **New Zealand's perspective**

Because of the importance of the Chinese market to New Zealand tourism, Tourism New Zealand is trying to improve the quality of the travel experience for Chinese visitors. To this end, Tourism New Zealand has identified five objectives for the Chinese market. These are to:

- Enhance the quality of the travel consumers by motivating travel companies to include more activities in their itineraries
- Increase the length of stay of visitors from China and to encourage a mono-New Zealand product to the market
- Increase independent travel and length of stay from China
- Develop the capability of the international, particularly Chinese, travel industry to market New Zealand

- Communicate and consult with key sector groups about opportunities, strategies and plans for this market (Tourisminfo, 2005).

### **Chinese tourists and Chinese heritage in New Zealand**

The Chinese heritage in New Zealand was predominantly initiated during the gold mining era, from 1865 to 1901 (Ip, 2003). Chinese miners, almost exclusively male, came to seek their fortune but not many were successful. The Chinese miners lived in huts, and worked and stayed within their groups, forming a small Chinese society. Once the gold mining era ended, some of the Chinese miners stayed in New Zealand. Today, there is some evidence of this Chinese heritage remaining in the goldfields of the South Island of New Zealand. Most of this heritage is in Central Otago, although there are some sites on the West Coast of the South Island also. This heritage provides evidence of how Chinese people lived and worked outside of their homeland. Chinese visitors would like to see the footprints their countrymen have left on New Zealand. On the other hand, this heritage portrays a generally sad story, which may not appeal to some visitors who may even feel ashamed to visit. Therefore in order to attract Chinese tourists to these sites, a key goal has to be to consider how to turn this sad history into a positive expression of these people's resilience in the face of adversity. In relation to this, preserving, maintaining and promoting the actual mining site heritage of Chinese in New Zealand in a way that appeals to Chinese tourists will be important.

# 1 Introduction

China has experienced dramatic developments in its economy since 1978, when the government changed its policy to focus on economic restructuring. The increase in average income and less restrictive tourism policy have enabled Chinese citizens to travel both domestically and outside of the country. Chinese people have a desire to travel to other countries, and overseas travelling has become a popular trend. For example, a study by American Express of 1,200 rich Chinese people in eight major cities from August to September of 2005 found that over 60 percent of the interviewees dreamed of travelling overseas (Chinanews.cn, 2006). In this context, China is rising rapidly as a new major source of outbound tourists in the world (GOV.cn, 2005).

In 1998, a significant number of Chinese visitors (13,119) came to New Zealand; since then the number has increased dramatically, jumping to 84,731 visitors in 2005 (TRCNZ, 2005). Data shows China is already the sixth biggest market for New Zealand and it is expected to continue to grow. As a market with a great potential it is felt that the potential of the Chinese market to the New Zealand tourism industry should be paid more attention. To this end, this report is going to review Chinese culture, the current situation of Chinese outbound tourism and its significance to New Zealand, visitors' behaviour and characteristics, New Zealand's objectives of developing the Chinese market, and Chinese tourists and Chinese heritage in New Zealand. It will conclude by suggesting some further avenues of investigation.

## 2 Chinese Culture

In terms of Chinese visitors, this report will focus only on the Chinese people from mainland China. China is a big country with a surface area of 9,600,000 km<sup>2</sup> and a population exceeding 1,300,000,000 souls. China has 56 ethnic groups, with different subcultures. The largest ethnic group is “Han” which is well over 90% of the population. There are many different dialects spoken in China, but the official language is Mandarin which is based on the Beijing dialect and is called “Putong Hua” in Chinese.

China has a long history of food culture, which has a great diversity from the north to south part of the country. Different regions have different traditional foods and different ways of cooking. Chinese people enjoy rich and delicious meals and they like eating out. Chinese staple foods are noodles and rice; traditional drinks are Chinese wine and tea. The typical dining habit is that rice is served individually and the side dishes served on the large plates in the centre of the table; everyone uses their chopsticks to get a few bites from the plates. The way of serving food is not only used within a family but also in restaurants.

Chinese are polite and have a reserved manner. They shake hands when meeting friends or strangers. Hugs usually happen between lovers not friends. In general Chinese do not speak forthrightly, and directly pointing out someone’s mistake seems rude. People feel that to be corrected in front of many people is to lose face.

China has a very rich history, which is around five thousand years old. There are diverse heritages of buildings, collections, cultures left from their great ancestors from different dynasties. Chinese people are proud of and interested in their history and heritage in general, and they maintain their heritage very well. When holidays come, many will go for a trip to visit places that have great heritage. Beijing is a popular destination because of its precious inheritance; for example, the Great Wall from the Qing dynasty, around two thousand years ago, and the Forbidden City from the last dynasty.

In general, Chinese tourists prefer arranged package tours, especially for long distance travel because they do not like anything uncertain; and they like to be looked after. When they go on a trip, they like to stay in hotels; camping and tramping are not favoured activities. A Chinese proverb says “economise at home, but take enough

money en route” (Becken, 2003). In keeping with this Chinese tourists usually take adequate money for their trip. Bringing back souvenirs and presents for families and friends is also an important tradition in China.

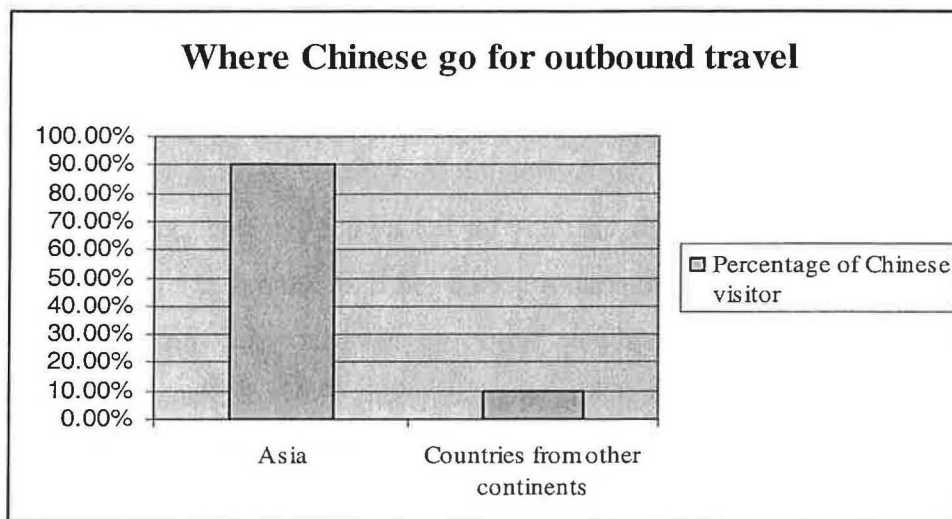
### 3 Overview of the Chinese Market

The Chinese outbound tourism market started in 1983, when Hong Kong and Macao were opened to tourists from mainland China. In the 23 years since then, Chinese outbound tourism has experienced dramatic development. In 1988, Thailand was the first country identified as a tourist destination for Chinese tourists, which means China permitted its citizens to travel to Thailand for leisure and personal purposes. Singapore and Malaysia were the next two countries engaged in outbound group tours for Chinese citizens in 1990. In 1991, Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia were granted approved destination status (ADS) by the Chinese government (Laws & Pan, 2001). Approved destination status simplified visa procedures for Chinese tour groups to these three countries. Until 1999 the countries granted ADS were from South-east Asia, but in this year Australia and New Zealand became the first two western countries approved as overseas tourism destinations for Chinese tourists. In October 30, 2003, China and the European Union signed a tourism agreement, so that the twelve European Union countries were granted ADS. These countries are Germany, France, Spain, Portugal, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, Greece, Italy, Sweden and Finland. Out of 76 countries and regions now engaged in outbound group tours from China, 40 have ADS agreements with China (Chinese Government, 2005).

The Chinese outbound travel market has been growing very fast. It has increased at an annual rate of 20-30 percent over the last four to five years. The number of Chinese outbound tourists reached 28.85 million in 2004, and over the first ten months of 2005 25.76 million outbound tourists were recorded (Chinese Government, 2005). The World Tourism Organization predicts that China will become the world's fourth largest source of outbound tourism over the next few years. Chinese tourists are one of the leaders in per-capita consumption by outbound tourists. They purchased 7.8 percent of all duty-free goods bought in EU nations in 2002, ranking third behind Russia and the United States (Chinese Government., 2003).

Asian countries are still the most common destinations for Chinese outbound tourists. In the period January to June 2005, 90.4 percent of Chinese tourists visited Asian countries, while only 9.6 percent travelled to other countries (Huzhou Zaixian, 2005). This may be because the cost is lower for travelling to most Asian countries, which is

around RMB3000 to RMB5000 (Chinese Currency), compared with travelling to European and Oceanic countries, which costs at least RMB10,000.

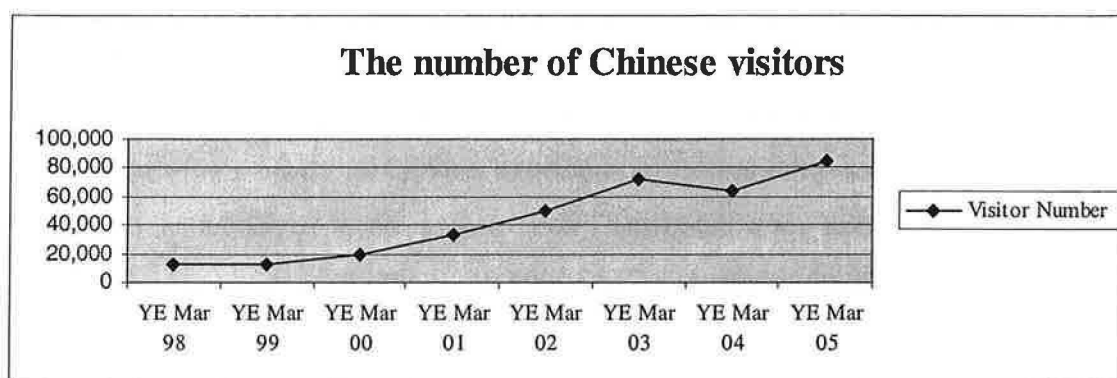


China is still a new tourism market for New Zealand compared with other more established markets. Although New Zealand was granted ADS in 1999, it was opened to only to residents of three cities of China: Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. This meant that Chinese tourists from these three cities are able to visit New Zealand for a holiday but people from the rest of China could not come as holiday travellers. As of July 2004 people from another four provinces: Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, and two cities: Tianjing and Chongqing are allowed to travel to New Zealand on holiday visas (CNTA, n.d.).

There are 20 authorised Chinese agents who can apply for Approved Destination Status group visas with the New Zealand Immigration Service. They are qualified to sell holiday travel to New Zealand and work with Inbound Tour operators. Other agents can only sell other categories of trips, such as business and educational trips (Tourisminfo, 2005). These authorised agents must have had very good performance and reputation of organising tour groups in the past. If this reputation and standard is not maintained the authority from the Chinese government would be removed. This authority can be taken away by the government if any accident or incident occurred during a trip, such as a Chinese tourist being lost or injured in New Zealand.

In Chinese culture establishing “Guan Xi” (relationship) and kickbacks is important for Chinese businessmen. Therefore, it is essential for the local operators in New Zealand to build a good relationship with the Chinese tour agents in charge of a tour.

Although China is a new and developing tourist market, it has become New Zealand's sixth biggest market and is expected to become the fourth in the next five years (Rowan, 2005). There has been a steady increase in numbers from March 1998 to March 2005, excluding a decline of 11.2 percent during 2004. Visitor numbers reached a peak of 84,731 in 2005, a figure six times that of 1998 (TRCNZ, 2005).



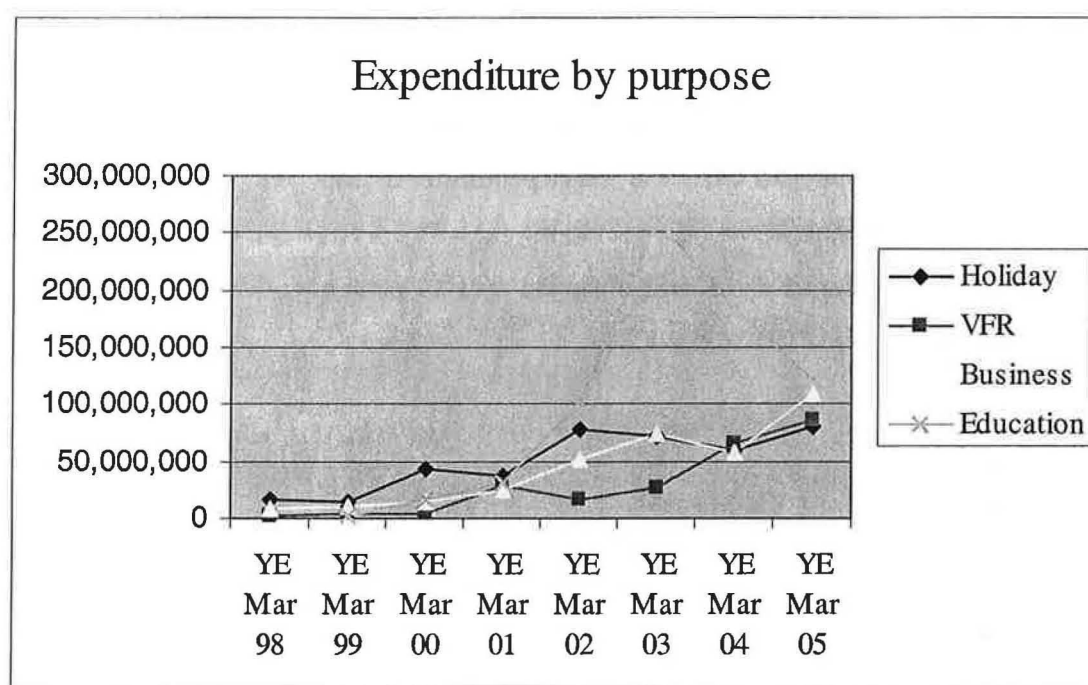
China is also New Zealand's fifth largest source of international visitor expenditure, accounting for NZ\$403,926,733 of expenditure in the year ended March 2005, an increase of 3.4 percent over the previous year. By contrast, the expenditure of two other Asian markets, Japan and Korea, dropped by 10.7 percent and 59.4 percent respectively in the same period (TRCNZ, 2005).

Total Expenditure (NZ dollars) by Origin

Origin	YE Mar 04	YE Mar 05	Increased by
Australia	1,304,454,331	1,399,585,052	+7.3%
UK	946,330,858	932,781,209	-1.4%
USA	549,450,083	614,573,862	+11.9%
Japan	639,688,869	571,549,090	-10.7%
China	390,512,028	403,926,733	+3.4%
Korea	625,911,089	254,332,652	-59.4%



Educational travellers from China began arriving in New Zealand in 1999. This market has contributed the largest proportion of the total Chinese expenditure since 2002, when it accounted for NZ\$102,121,015. Although this figure has dropped since 2003, from NZ\$261,900,013 to NZ\$121,540,782 in 2005, it remains the largest source of expenditure amongst Chinese visitors. Business travel from China has experienced steady increase and this group's contribution reached NZ\$108,633,80 in 2005. VFR travellers' contribution has also increased steadily and reached NZ\$85,968,451 in 2005. Expenditure by holiday travellers has fluctuated since 2002. From 1998 to 2001 this group contributed the largest proportion of expenditure from a very small base, but by 2005 this market contributed the lowest proportion of expenditure, despite being the largest category of visitors (TRCNZ, 2005).



## **4 Visitors' Profile**

### **4.1 Demographics**

The age of Chinese visitors to New Zealand range from 15 to over 65. Males made up 64 percent of all visitors in the year ended 2005. The majority are aged from 35 to 54; 37.2 percent of visitors were between 45 and 54 years old, and 31.3 percent were from 35 to 44 in the year ended March 2005. This group of people are mainly holiday and business travellers. They usually have high social status, such as being private enterprise owners, professionals (lawyers, scientists etc.) and representatives from the media and sports (Becken, 2003). Educational travellers are younger on average; the majority of them are from 15 to 24 years old, and they are predominantly female (TRCNZ, 2005). They are usually from wealthy families and are financially dependent on their families. Most of them are the only child of their families and are given much money for living and travelling in New Zealand.

Not many Chinese can afford travelling to New Zealand because of the high cost. The income of Chinese is highly diverse for different regions. The per capita income of China's top five cities, namely Shanghai and Beijing municipalities and Zhejiang, Guangdong and Fujian provinces, averaged RMB7, 453 (Chinese currency) in the first half of 2005, which doubled the per capita income of the five poorest provinces and autonomous regions (Finfacts.com, 2005). The cost of a package tour to New Zealand is around RMB15, 000; for the travellers coming for VFR and education, the cost is even greater and hard to predict, as they stay for a longer period. Therefore, most travellers are from coastal provinces and big cities where the residents have higher incomes (Zhang & Vincent, 2001).

### **4.2 Purpose of trip**

In the year ended March 2005, the most common purpose of Chinese people visiting New Zealand was for a holiday (34.4 percent) or for business (30.3 percent). Visiting friends and relatives (VFR) (20.1 percent) and education (11.3 percent) are also popular reasons for visiting New Zealand (TRCNZ, 2005). VFR travellers are mainly older, and the majority of them come to visit their children who work, study or have migrated in New Zealand. They have family trips when their children are on holiday. Most

education travellers come for high school or tertiary education. Chinese parents expect their children to receive an English education and overseas living experience, as they believe that would bring their children a bright future. The safe environment and affordable cost makes New Zealand a popular destination for education. The number of educational travellers reached a peak of 13, 105 in the year ended of March 2004 (TRCNZ, 2005). However, it has been dropping since this time. The value of the New Zealand dollar has been increasing against Chinese currency in the last four years, which means studying and living in New Zealand is getting more and more expensive for Chinese students. The bankruptcy of a number of New Zealand language schools has negatively influenced New Zealand's reputation. Therefore, by the year ended March of 2005, the number of Chinese educational visitors had dropped to 9, 568 (TRCNZ, 2005).

#### **4.3 Image of New Zealand**

Most Chinese people first heard about New Zealand through its dairy products. With the increase of the number of Chinese students coming to the country, more and more people are becoming aware of New Zealand. In general they see New Zealand as an agricultural country with beautiful scenery. Maori culture, sheep and wool products are well known among Chinese also.

However, for some tourists who have been to New Zealand, New Zealand means more than just Maori, sheep and wool products. Articles about the image of New Zealand have been published on a Chinese website. From this site it is clear that Chinese tourists think the scenery of New Zealand is like a watercolour painting – beautiful and peaceful. They say that the sky is so blue, the land is very green, and the houses are lovely – it is as if they are from a fairy tale. One thing tourists appreciate the most is the fresh air; the lack of air pollution means they can enjoy the fragrance of the air which contains the smell of the grass, the mud and the sun (Lotour, 2005).

#### **4.4 Travel experience**

The experience of Chinese tourists is very different depending on their purposes of travel and the visa they have. Characteristics of holiday and business travellers are

quite similar, hence they will be discussed together, and holiday travellers will be focussed on. Likewise, the VFR and education travellers are discussed together.

#### 4.4.1 The holiday & business traveller

##### *4.4.1.1 Seasonality*

Business travellers are less influenced by seasonality, but holiday tourists are significantly influenced. Chinese have three weeks holiday during the year which are called golden weeks for travelling. The first period starts from Chinese New Year, either January or February according to the lunar calendar; the second week starts from Labour Day on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May; the third one is from the Chinese National day on the 1<sup>st</sup> of October (Tourisminfo, 2005). Apart from Chinese New Year, the other two periods are both low travel seasons for New Zealand. This means that New Zealand is able to accommodate more Chinese tourists during these seasons. Hence, products promotions can be done towards the Chinese market during these periods particularly. A good quality tour package or a special discount will certainly bring in more tourists. In addition, Chinese school summer holidays from July 1 to August 31 can provide another opportunity for New Zealand to offer summer breaks for parents and students (Tourisminfo, 2005).

##### *4.4.1.2 Tour schedule*

Chinese visitors who come to New Zealand as tourists must travel within a tour group organised by authorised travel agents and they have to purchase a proposed package tour in advance of receiving a visa. In this way, the travel routes and activities are very much dependent on the agents and tourists can only visit places in the schedule.

There are two travel routes available for Chinese visiting on a holiday visa (see Appendix I). Because of the geographic proximity, Australia and New Zealand are usually sold as a combined tour for twelve days. Tourists usually depart from China to Australia and spend eight days there; they then travel to New Zealand for only four days. Due to the time limitation, the tour agents take visitors only to places in the North Island. Auckland is the most common destination as it is a gateway to the North Island and the point of arrival for tourists. Tourists usually go for sightseeing around Auckland city, and some visit Waitomo caves. Rotorua is another popular place where tourists can visit a Maori village, the hot springs and shearing displays (Howtrip.com, n.d.). The tour schedule is available to the tourists before they purchase the package

and because New Zealand is well known for Maori culture, sheep and wool products, the activities listed in the schedule match tourists' image about New Zealand and they are happy to purchase it. As for why tour agents choose Auckland and Rotorua as tourist destinations, the answer is not clear. It may be because of the good relationship they have built with the local operators (Howtrip.com, n.d.).

Another more recent and less popular tour route offered includes a visit to both the North and South Island of New Zealand within eight or nine days. Outbound tourism for Chinese people is still a new experience; it has only been seventeen years since Thailand was opened as a holiday destination in 1988. Therefore most Chinese tourists would prefer to see more different countries and cultures during a trip rather than an extended trip to one country. It has been assumed that "when traditionally frugal Chinese families could afford to travel the world, they would select inexpensive routes with more overseas destinations" (Cao, 2004).

This seems to be the case in New Zealand, where a mono-country tour of eight or nine days is a less popular choice for Chinese tourists, however the option is also new, and less frequently offered, so it may be that tourists are not yet aware of this option. According to this schedule, tourists usually arrive in Auckland first and spend three days in the North Island. As well as the activities taken in Auckland and Rotorua, they go sightseeing in Wellington and visit the Beehive. They then fly to the South Island and visit Christchurch, Queenstown and Dunedin, undertaking general sightseeing in these centres. Some of these tours take tourists to Cromwell to visit the gold mining centre. On the eighth or ninth day, they leave for China from Auckland Airport.

#### *4.4.1.3 The type of travel*

Holiday tourists must travel within a tour group on a coach-based tour, with a driver and tour guide provided for the trip. As many holiday tourists cannot understand English, a Chinese tour guide who can speak English is essential. Less research about business travellers has been undertaken, they may travel with a small group, but their trip is freer than holiday takers although still limited by the short length of stay of most of these travellers.

Since self travel is non-existent for Chinese holiday tourists, a hotel is the only option for the accommodation, and they usually stay at 3 star or 4 star hotels. Business travellers also prefer staying at hotels, and according to statistics from Tourism New

Zealand, 70 percent of Chinese travellers stayed at hotels in New Zealand in 2004 (Tourisminfo, 2005).

#### *4.4.1.4 Visitor behaviour*

The most popular activity for Chinese visitors in New Zealand is shopping; 80 percent of visitors shopped during their stay in New Zealand in 2004 (Tourisminfo, 2005). New Zealand's wool and lanolin products are well known in China, so many tourists would buy these as presents for family and friends.

General sightseeing, eating out and city walks are also popular activities for Chinese visitors and is reflected in the tour schedule offered to holiday tourists (Tourisminfo, 2005). . When a group of holiday tourists arrive in New Zealand, they have a walk around cities, and go sightseeing, visiting places like botanic gardens, and other significant natural and built landmarks. They spend less time visiting attractions where an entry fee is charged or undertaking commercial activities, thereby saving money and contributing to the lower expenditure of this group.

Meals are an important part of the trip and for holiday tourists, all meals is arranged by their tour agents. In general, all types of Chinese visitors prefer a Chinese style meal and they like to eat out. On their tours of New Zealand they would usually have a western style breakfast and a Chinese style lunch and dinner at Chinese restaurants. It seems that holiday tourists do not have a chance to experience Kiwi food.

#### *4.4.1.5 The length of stay*

Most holiday tourists stay in New Zealand under five days, but some may stay for eight days, if they choose to travel on a tour of New Zealand alone. Their length of stay is reflected from the tour schedule. Business travellers stay slightly longer, about eight days on average (Becken, 2003).

### 4.4.2 VFR & Education traveller

#### *4.4.2.1 Seasonality*

Most VFR travellers come to New Zealand during Chinese holidays, but some retired VFR travellers are less influenced by seasonality, and they may arrive at any time of the year. For education travellers, the peak season of their arrival is around February, after Chinese New Year, when school or tertiary terms are commencing.

#### *4.4.1.3 The type of travel*

VFR and education travellers are able to travel freely around New Zealand. VFR travellers will tend to travel around New Zealand with their families and friends. They may not speak English, and they are looked after by family and friends who may play a role of tour guide. Educational visitors do not have the same level of language problem, and they are most likely to travel independently between school terms or university semesters. These travellers make their own itineraries and plans, and get brochures, book tickets and accommodation through information centres. They tend to travel with a small group of people, generally also educational visitors. Both VFR and educational travellers use private or rental cars on their trips in New Zealand and are most likely to stay at motels. According to 2004 statistics from Tourism New Zealand, about 13 percent of Chinese visitors used private cars and 5 percent used rental cars in New Zealand (Tourisminfo, 2005).

#### *4.4.1.4 The length of stay*

VFR and educational travellers stay longer than holiday and business travellers, with educational travellers staying for the longest period. Their length of stay is varied from several months to several years depending on the length of the study course.

### **4.5 The level of satisfaction**

It has been stated that “Chinese tourists are leaving New Zealand with little to remember except views of farm animals and geysers from behind fences” (Rowan, 2005). Recent reports suggest that overall, Chinese holidaymakers are not very happy with their trip to New Zealand. In a recent survey, only 19 percent of visitors reported feeling satisfied with their trip. One source of dissatisfaction is the language barrier; there is not enough signage of information written in Chinese. Moreover, holiday tourists have to travel with a packaged tour, so that in large part, they still stay in their own culture and environment. Thus they do not seem to have a chance to have contact with locals. The length of stay is also a factor affecting holiday visitors’ satisfaction. Most tourists just stay under five days. So they do not have enough time to experience New Zealand (“Keeping them happy”, 2005).

Clearly the vastly different experiences of different groups of Chinese visitors to New Zealand mean that more indepth research is needed to investigate the reasons for



dissatisfaction amongst these visitors. As a case in point, a couple of examples highlight the differing experiences of Chinese visitors to New Zealand:

*Mr Fan is a successful Chinese businessman who has had much experience of overseas travelling. In August 2005, he and his teenage daughter came to New Zealand for the school holidays within a tour group. They spent four days in the North Island, and visited Auckland and Rotorua. Mr Fan is happy with his trip in general, but he regrets that he did not see much of New Zealand. He also said that he would like to see the South Island and the Chinese heritage left from the gold mining era, if he had a chance to visit New Zealand again (Fan, 2005, pers.com.).*

*Mrs Chen is a Chinese lady aged 70, who came to Christchurch to visit her daughter's family in September 2005 and stayed for a number of months. It was her second visit to New Zealand and she feels happy with her experience. Her daughter took her to the North Island before Christmas last year. They travelled by rental car and stayed in motels, and visited Auckland, Rotorua and Wellington. They also travelled the South Island during the New Year. Mrs Chen feels that New Zealand is very different from China; it is so close to the nature. She saw penguins and dolphins, which she had previously only seen on TV. She very much appreciated the natural scenery of New Zealand, and planed to go back China in May 2006. Though, she sometimes feels lonely, because of the language barrier, she said that she would like to visit New Zealand again, if she is still healthy enough to travel (Chen, 2006, pers.com.).*



## 5 New Zealand's perspective

In general, 95 percent of visitors are satisfied with their trip to New Zealand, but Chinese visitors show a much lower satisfaction level (Tourisminfo, 2005). This statistic is concerning given China's increasingly important role as a tourist market (Tourisminfo, 2005; Rowan, 2005). In light of these facts, Tourism New Zealand is trying to improve the quality of the travel experience for Chinese visitors.

In this regard, Tourism New Zealand has five objectives for the Chinese market and each of these will be discussed in turn. The first objective is as follows:

- Enhance the quality of the travel experience for consumers by motivating travel companies to include more activities in their itineraries (Tourisminfo, 2005)

Many Chinese visitors are not aware of the attractions and activities available in New Zealand; the information they can get is mainly from the travel schedule arranged by the Chinese agents. One Chinese lady said "New Zealand has to advertise itself, otherwise we will not know what kind of attraction is available" (Zhu, 2005, pers.com.). This means that at present, New Zealand's promotion is not reaching potential consumers. This may be partly due to the importance of the Chinese tour operators in determining the schedules of travellers, meaning that the Chinese tourist has little input to the trip planning process, however ultimately they are the ones who are voicing dissatisfaction with their experience. Thus, while the key is to establish a good relationship with Chinese tour operators, and through them to promote a wider range of New Zealand experiences, there may be the potential also to establish tourism offices in China in order to promote New Zealand directly to Chinese consumers.

The second objective is:

- Increase length of stay from China and to introduce mono New Zealand product to the market (Tourisminfo, 2005)

To introduce a mono New Zealand product for the Chinese market is going to be very hard in the short term. It not only depends on the effort of the New Zealand tourism industry, but also has lot to do with the maturity of the Chinese tourist market and their country's history and culture. It only has been seventeen years, since Chinese visitors started to travel foreign countries; and being able to travel western countries is a symbol of high social status, because of its high cost and tight policy of getting visas.

Therefore, having an experience of an overseas trip is something that most Chinese people are proud of. The thing that matters to them is not how well they have seen a country, but how many countries they have visited. That is why they want to visit as many destinations as possible during a trip. This pattern was seen also in Western countries when overseas travel first became possible for the general population. At this time, a European trip, covering ten countries in a similar number of days was quite common. In the Chinese context, a further issue is that there is not much difference between the costs of a mono New Zealand tour and a combined tour with Australia, which are both around RMB 15, 000. Consequently, it is also difficult to increase length of stay, if Chinese visitors do not choose mono New Zealand product. However, when Chinese tourists have had more experience of overseas travel, and are able to travel more freely than now; they will like to have a decent trip in one country. Also, if New Zealand can offer a lower cost of mono travel product, Chinese tourists will come.

The third objective is:

- Increase independent travel and length of stay from China (Tourisminfo, 2005)

Those independent travellers from China are mainly for education and VFR, who are able to have self travel and stay for a longer period compared with holiday travellers. The number of education travellers has dropped after 2003, but, the number of VFR travellers has experienced steady increase from 1998 (1,717) to 2005 (17,069). Hence, Tourism New Zealand could target these two groups to increase the independent travel. It is becoming difficult to encourage more educational travellers to come to New Zealand, because the New Zealand dollar has been quite strong, although there has been some weakening early in 2006. If there is not much difference between the costs of studying in New Zealand and Australia, many students would prefer to go to Australia, as they think Australia is a bigger country which has more opportunities for study and work. In addition, if the government wants to increase independent travel and length of stay for holiday travellers, it has to deal with the visa issue, which has to be negotiated with the Chinese government.

The fourth objective:

- Develop the capability of the international travel industry to market New Zealand (Tourisminfo, 2005)

The tourism industry of New Zealand is quite advanced. Facilities like motels, rental cars and information centres provide good service for tourists, however in China, rental cars and information centre for tourists are non-existent so visitors have little experience of these. Having said this, New Zealand information centre still mainly serve the English speaker as brochures are all written in English with few Chinese translations. Therefore, lessening the language barrier, including signage and brochures in Chinese, and making these facilities less intimidating for Chinese tourists may be an option. Having sales staff in souvenir shops speaking even some basic Chinese, such as general greetings, will make Chinese tourists feel at home. In addition, there is no direct airline from New Zealand to China, limiting access and lengthening the travel time for Chinese visitors. With China being the sixth biggest market for New Zealand, establishing a direct air route may be essential.

The Final objective is:

- Communicate and consult with key sector groups about opportunities strategies and plans (Tourisminfo, 2005)

To communicate and consult with key sector groups is very important for macro level planning and good strategies and plans can facilitate the tourism industry. There is an agreement between Japan and New Zealand. It is that young people under 30 years old from one country can have one year holiday and working in the other. Thus, Japanese tourists are able to travel independently, and the number of holiday travellers is more than that of education travellers. So, if key sector groups from New Zealand and China can communicate and negotiate about such issues as travel and visa policy, and tourism strategies and plans, the number of Chinese tourists may increase, and independent travel may be encouraged.

## 6 Chinese Tourists & Chinese heritage in New Zealand

Most of the Chinese heritage in New Zealand originates from the gold mining era, which occurred between 1865 and 1901. “Chinese gold seekers” were originally invited from Victoria in Australia to rework the Otago goldfields after the European miners left for West Coast goldfields (Ip, 2003). Other gold miners came directly to New Zealand by ship from the Guangdong province. Miners came to seek their fortune, but there was little gold left after Europeans had worked the fields, so not many were successful in these endeavours, although some did quite well for themselves through running stores and other businesses. The Chinese miners lived in huts and generally worked and stayed within their groups, forming a small Chinese society. Miners were excluded from the New Zealand society and not treated fairly by Europeans. Today, there is some Chinese heritage that still remains, mainly in Otago (see extended history and sites in Appendix II). Hence, the following is going to discuss the Chinese heritage of New Zealand and its potential appeal to Chinese tourists.

The Chinese heritage in New Zealand shows how Chinese people lived and worked outside of their homeland. This heritage will appeal to Chinese visitors, as it is a part of Chinese history and they would like to seek the footprints their country people have left in a distant land. This interest is evident in the goldfields region of Victoria, Australia. In a survey of Chinese package tourists to Sovereign Hill, Zhang and Murphy (2005) found that these tourists had a highly positive attitude toward their goldfields experience, which also expressed Chinese gold rush history. Likewise, Chinese visitors would show a great interest in the heritage left by gold miners in New Zealand.

On the other hand, the Chinese heritage of New Zealand portrays a sad story as Chinese gold miners were not successful in their life and were treated poorly by Europeans. As the heritage is currently presented, there may be little for Chinese to be proud of and they may even feel ashamed of this heritage. Moreover, much of the Chinese gold mining heritage has not been well maintained in the past and a lot of built evidence has been destroyed, meaning visitors may feel disappointed if they find there is not much to see. Miss Huang is a Chinese student from Lincoln University who is interested in history and heritage. She visited Shantytown, a replica of a gold mining centre two years ago. She said “I felt disappointed with the China town displayed, as it is actually only a hut”. Somehow it did not match her expectations (Huang, 2006, pers.com.).

Having said this, there has been significant restoration and interpretation work undertaken in Central Otago, with the restoration and reconstruction of the Arrowtown Chinese Village and current work to restore the significant Chinese heritage at the Lawrence Mining Camp south of Dunedin as two cases of note. These examples suggest that there may be greater future potential in this form of heritage tourism in the near future (see Appendix II).

The Chinese mining heritage of New Zealand has the potential to attract Chinese visitors, but there is still much room for improvement. In the first place, it has to be promoted to Chinese people. Many Chinese are not aware of the gold mining history in New Zealand; they only know that Chinese gold seekers have lived in Australia. Thus, promotion is very important; if the information cannot reach Chinese, certainly they will not go and visit. Secondly, the protection and preservation of this resource is essential. There are ten Chinese gold mining sites registered by the Heritage Trust, however many more are not listed and maintained. If a site is well protected, restored and interpreted, a case like Miss Huang's disappointment of Shantytown's Chinatown would not happen. The key thing to be considered is how to turn the sad history of the Chinese in New Zealand into a positive expression of a people succeeding through adversity, so that Chinese would like to visit. As stated above, there is evidence that New Zealand is starting to pay more attention to the Chinese heritage of this country, for example the project of rebuilding Lawrence Chinese camp, the Arrowtown Chinese Village and the promotion of the Cromwell mining centre are important cases in point, but there is no doubt that more could be done.

## 7 Conclusion

In conclusion, the Chinese heritage in New Zealand will appeal to Chinese visitors, however the fact remains that Chinese visitors come to New Zealand for its natural scenery and wildlife, not for its Chinese heritage; China itself has far greater history and heritage compared with the Chinese heritage in New Zealand. Having said this, if suitable tourist products can be developed which highlight this heritage in a way that is interesting and emphasises the positive aspects of an otherwise fairly demoralising history, these heritage products could add value to the Chinese visitors' experience of New Zealand. More research needs to be conducted in this area to explore the potential for the Chinese heritage of New Zealand to add value to the Chinese tourist experience in this country, including the kinds of product development which would appeal to the Chinese visitor market.

As this report has shown, there are significant differences in the characteristics of the Chinese visitors who come to New Zealand; the biggest distinction being between the short stay, package-touring Chinese holiday-maker and the more independent educational visitor or the VFR market. Research is needed to explore the differing motivations and expectations of the visitors themselves. In the case of the former market, an essential task must be to develop an understanding of the rationale and requirements of the 'gatekeepers' for Chinese holiday tourists, the tour companies.

## Appendix I: Tour schedule for Chinese Holidaymakers to New Zealand

(1) Eight days travelling the North and the South Island of New Zealand (Howtrip, n.d.)

Time	Destination	Activities
Day 1	Beijing—Singapore—Auckland	Airline travelling
Day 2	Auckland	Visiting Auckland Bridge, Bay of war, Harbour of Americas Cup
Day 3	Hamilton	Visit Waikato University, Waikato River, Botanic garden
	Rotorua	Visiting Maori village
Day 4	Rotorua	Watching sheep shearing
Day 5	Lake Ticapo	Sightseeing
	Queenstown	City tour
	Lake Wakatipu	Sightseeing
Day 6	Kawerau Gorge Mining Centre (Cromwell)	Sightseeing
	Mountain Cook National Park	Sightseeing
Day 7	Christchurch	Visiting Avon river, Cathedral Square, Hagley Park, Victoria park
Day 8	Christchurch—Auckland—Beijing	Airline travelling

(2) Nine days travelling the North and the South Island of New Zealand (Howtrip, n.d.)

Time	Destination	Activities
Day 1	Beijing—Auckland	Airline travelling
Day 2	Auckland	Visiting The Swan lake, Auckland bridge, Queens street, Yacht harbour
Day 3	Rotorua	Watching sheep shearing, and Maori performance Visiting Queen's park, Hot spring,
Day 4	Wellington	Visit Beehive, Sightseeing on Cook Strait
Day 5	Christchurch	Visiting Hagley park, Victoria park, Avon river
Day 6	Queenstown	Sightseeing
Day 7	Milford sound	Taking sightseeing boat
Day 8	Dunedin	Visiting old English style

		architecture
Day 9	Dunedin—Auckland—Beijing	Airline travelling

(3) Twelve days travelling Australia and New Zealand (Greatwalltravel.net, n.d.)

Time	Destination	Activities
Day1 to Day 8	Australia	
Day 9	Auckland	Visiting Mount Eden, Auckland bridge, and city sightseeing
Day 10	Rotorua	Visiting Maori village, Hot spring, and watching Maori performance
Day 11	Auckland	Seeing Kiwis
Day 12	Auckland—Hong Kong—Beijing	Airline travelling

(4) Twelve days travelling Australia and New Zealand (Howtrip, n.d.)

Time	Destination	Activities
Day 1 to Day 3	Australia	
Day 4	Auckland	Walking in the city, Visiting Mount Eden
Day 5	Waitomo	Visiting Waitomo caves
	Rotorua	Visiting Maori village, Hot spring
Day 6	Rotorua	Watching wool shearing
Day 7	Auckland	Sightseeing of the city
Day 8 to Day 11	Australia	
Day 12	Australia—Shanghai	Airline travelling



## Appendix II: The heritage of Chinese goldfields in New Zealand

### Introduction

The Chinese gold seekers' era in New Zealand occurred between December 1865 and 1901. Chinese gold miners were originally invited from Victoria Australia to rework the Otago goldfields after European miners left for the Wakamarina and West coast goldfields (Ip, 2003). After this time, more miners came directly by ship from Guangdong province to seek their fortune in New Zealand's gold fields. The goldminers were predominately males from rural families which could afford the ships fare and the special tax imposed on Chinese to enter New Zealand, or had the collateral for loans (Ip, 2003; Ng, 1993; Beatson & Beatson, 1990). They aimed to seek their fortune through gold mining before returning to China to have a comparatively comfortable life; unfortunately for most men, this trip home did not eventuate. Miners worked in central Otago initially, and by 1881, they made up about 40 percent of Otago's miners (Titus, 2003). In October 1871, thirty-four Chinese miners went to the West Coast of the South Island, when they were convinced that the Otago field had reached capacity; their numbers peaked of 1,219 in 1874 (Ip, 2003).

Chinese gold seekers experienced hardship in New Zealand. Their living conditions was poor; they lived in rough shacks, huts or caves dug into the rocks, which had not enough space to even stand up straight. Most of them spoke very little English, so they had difficulties with communication. Europeans disliked the Chinese and their long plait was an object of ridicule. Miners were excluded from New Zealand society, and had no political rights (Beatson & Beatson, 1990). In response to this situation, they established their own camps and formed a small Chinese community. During the 1870s, they were settled in twenty-five different places mainly in Central Otago and on the West Coast of the South Island. Significant settlements were located at Arrowtown, Cromwell and Alexandra in Otago, and Greymouth and Ross on the West Coast. The two largest camps were Round Hill (location) and Lawrence (south of Dunedin). These Chinese settlements had doctors, shops, opium and gambling houses. Once miners earned income, they usually went to these shops to buy goods, including imported Chinese foods, however some required the money to pay back debts, and still others might use the money for opium or to gamble (Beatson & Beatson, 1990). "Chinese miners wanted to earn the most money in the shortest possible time, then beggar off

home” (Titus, 2003). But there was not much gold left after Europeans had worked in the fields, so most of them did not succeed and many were not able to return to China.

Now, more than a hundred year has passed. Chinese miners have gone and many remains of their huts and shelters are ruined. But there are some huts, stores, cottage and etc. still survived including ten sites registered by the Historic Places Trust. However, since less research has been done on the West Coast, the sites discovered are mainly in the Otago region.

## The Chinese heritage in Otago

Place	Location & History	Sites	Description	Tourist trace	Website
Arrowtown	Situating 20 km north of Queenstown. Gold was discovered in the Arrow river in 1862. The Chinese settlement was on the south bank of Bush Creek, around 200 meters away from the main street of Arrowtown.	China Town	Remnants of a number of Chinese stone huts have been reconstructed (registered by the Historic Places Trust).	Numbers of people now visit the Chinese Village	<a href="http://www.arrowtown.com">www.arrowtown.com</a>
		Ah Lum's Store	It was probably built by Chinese storekeeper Wong Hop in the early 1880s. Ah Lum bought the section in 1909; he lived in the building until his death in 1927 (registered by the Historic Places Trust).		
		Ah Wak's lavatory	Only the stone privy survives today (registered by the Historic Places Trust).		
		Lakes District Museum	Photographic collection of Chinese gold miners		<a href="http://www.museumqueenstown.com">www.museumqueenstown.com</a>

Place	Location &History	Sites	Description	Tourist trace	Web site
Alexandra	Located on the bottom eastern side of South Island. Chinese arrived at the beginning of June 1866.	Alexandra Museum	Many pictures present the history of Chinese gold miners.		
Butcher's Gully	Gold was discovered in 1862	Lye Bow's cottage at Butchers Dam	The remains of Lye Bow's cottage, orchard & Garden still exist among the trees at the head of the reservoir.		
Clyde	It is at the entrance to the Dunstan Gorge, and was established on the banks of the Clutha river in 1862. Chinese arrived at the beginning of June 1866.	Chinese interpretation of Wong Gye's house			
Conroys Gully	Chinese miners moved in by 1870s.	Chinese rock shelters	One shelter beneath an overhanging bluff, was restored for the film "Illustrious Energy". (registered by the Historic Places Trust)		

Place	Location & History	Sites	Description	Tourist trace	Web site
Cromwell	The town stands on the shores of Lake Dunstan. A 'Chinese Gully' settlement existed at north of Cromwell by the end of 1866. In its heyday, 1870 and 1885, it had about 30 huts and 40 residents.	Cromwell Museum			<a href="http://www.cromwell.org.nz/museum">www.cromwell.org.nz/museum</a>
		The Kawarau Gorge Mining Centre	It has a replica of Chinese village	Some Chinese tour companies visit this site	<a href="http://www.newzealandnz.co.nz/destinations/cromwell.html">www.newzealandnz.co.nz/destinations/cromwell.html</a>
Dunedin	Gold was discovered in Otago in 1861. Chinese made considerable contribution from their increased skill in discovering & developing new fields and the supporting towns, such as Dunedin.	Sew Hoy and sons building	The Chinese entrepreneur Sew Hoy made it possible for Large-scale mining to be carried out on the river-flats. (registered by the Historic Places Trust).		
		Early Settlers Museum	The museum displays the history of Chinese gold miners		<a href="http://www.otago.settlers.museum">www.otago.settlers.museum</a>
		Otago Museum	Special exhibitions about rediscovering China is coming soon on 2nd April 2006.		<a href="http://www.otagomuseum.govt.nz">www.otagomuseum.govt.nz</a>

Place	Location & History	Sites	Description	Tourist trace	Web site
Lawrence	Lawrence Chinatown was founded in 1867, on the 'gateway' to the Otago goldfields. It was the largest Otago goldfields township in 1871.	Sam Chew Lain's Empire Hotel	It was rebuilt in 1884, now a private dwelling (registered by the Historic Places Trust).	The Lawrence Chinese Camp Charitable Trust, led by Dr Jim Ng of Dunedin, has plans to restore the site and create a major visitor experience, including a hotel, on the site.	
		Joss House	It was opened in 1869, now a holiday cottage (registered by the Historic Places Trust).		
		Sam Chew Lain's tomb	A massive tomb in Lawrence cemetery		
Macraes Flat	The township of Macraes sprang up on Macraes Flat after gold was discovered in Deepdell Creek in May 1862. It is 3 kilometers south of Deepdell. It had two Chinese camps.	Merchant Louis Gay Tan's mud-brick house	It is unoccupied and rapidly deteriorating, but it is in the process of being restored.		
Moa Creek	It is near Poolburn. Gold was discovered in March 1863. From 1870, Chinese miners worked there for 40 yrs	Chinese stone hut	It is a typical Chinese stone hut with rounded chimney beside doorway at one end of the hut.		

Place	Location &History	Sites	Description	Tourist trace	Web site
Nokomai	It is located between the Garvie Mountains and slate range of Northern South land. Gold was discovered in 1862.	Choie Sew Hoy's hydraulic sluicing operation	It is registered by the Historic Places Trust.		<a href="http://www.nokomai.co.nz">www.nokomai.co.nz</a>
Quartz Reef Point	It is 4 kilometres north of Cromwell on the road to Bendigo. It has a rich auriferous ground lay exposed by the early miners.	An old Chinese stone hut near the tailings	It has become heavily over grown with briar		
Queenstown	On the Shotover river near Queenstown	Choie Sew Hoy's dredging operation	It is registered by the Historic Places Trust.		
Roxburgh	Roxburgh town lies alongside the Clutha river in the beautiful Teviot valley	Yue Ah Hee's store and boarding house			
Skippers	In the hills behind Queenstown, were the richest goldfield of the Otago goldfields	Wong Gong's terrace	It was a market garden and store complex and the structures.		

## The Chinese heritage on the West Coast

Place	Location	Sites	Description	Tourist trace	Web site
Shanty town	It is located approximately 10 km's south of Greymouth	A replica of an 1860's gold rush town	It has four Chinese huts and two tents.	It was a finalist in the 1996 New Zealand Tourism Awards and is perhaps the Grey River District's No. 1 tourist attraction	<a href="http://www.shantytown.co.nz">www.shantytown.co.nz</a>



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